

## Pinehurst

Grooming a champion takes experience, long hours and meticulous care -- three of Wayne Maples' and Lew Metts' specialties

by Maureen Hrehocik, managing editor

"Intense" is the name of the game at Pinehurst Country Club.

The Pinehurst, NC, vicinity has one of the highest concentrations of golf courses in one area in the world. The six-course complex (the first active golf course complex built in the U.S.) totals 850 acres with 630,000 square feet of greens with an average of 1,500 people playing a day during peak season. The club is open 12 months a year and had a whopping 1983 business increase of 126 percent.

"Intense" is a household word at Pinehurst. Ask two of its superintendents, Wayne Maples and Lewis Metts.

Maples' prestigious No. 2 course (this year named to *Golf Digest's* Top 10 courses in the country), averages 260 people playing a day during peak season.

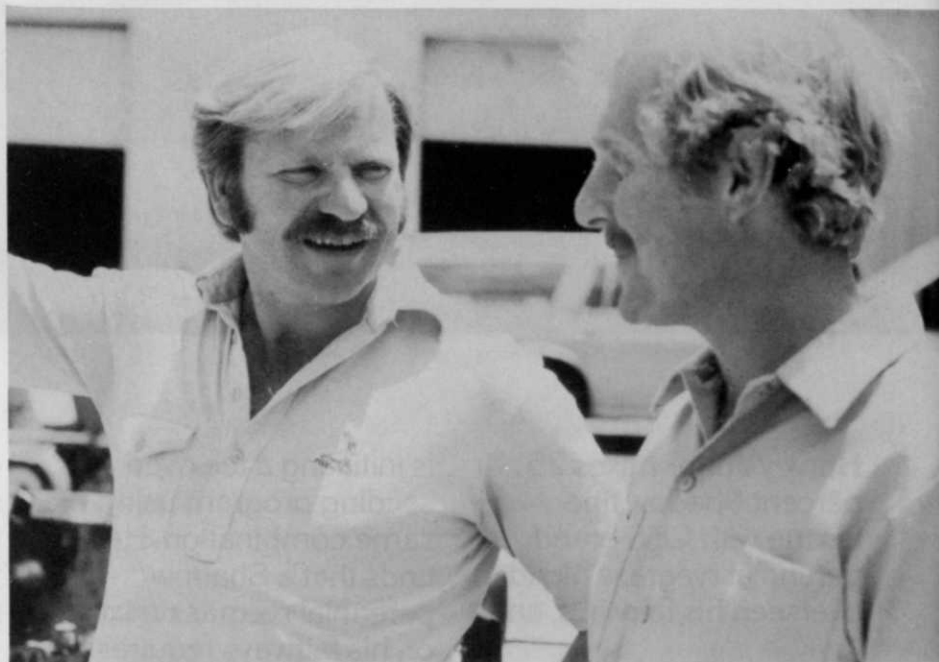
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**"There's more pressure here to keep the level of maintenance up because of heavy play ..."**

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The club's computerized tee time system turns people away on many days.

Because of the caliber of the course, it must be kept in tournament condition at all times. That's pressure, pure and simple.



Lew Metts, left, is in charge of Courses 1, 3 and 5 at Pinehurst.

Metts, in charge of courses 1, 3 and 5, starts his day at 4:30 a.m. during the busy summer months and usually ends it around 8 p.m. There is still not enough time to get everything done.

Both men's courses are part of an overall \$1.55 million maintenance budget, with each course having its own individual budget and equipment.

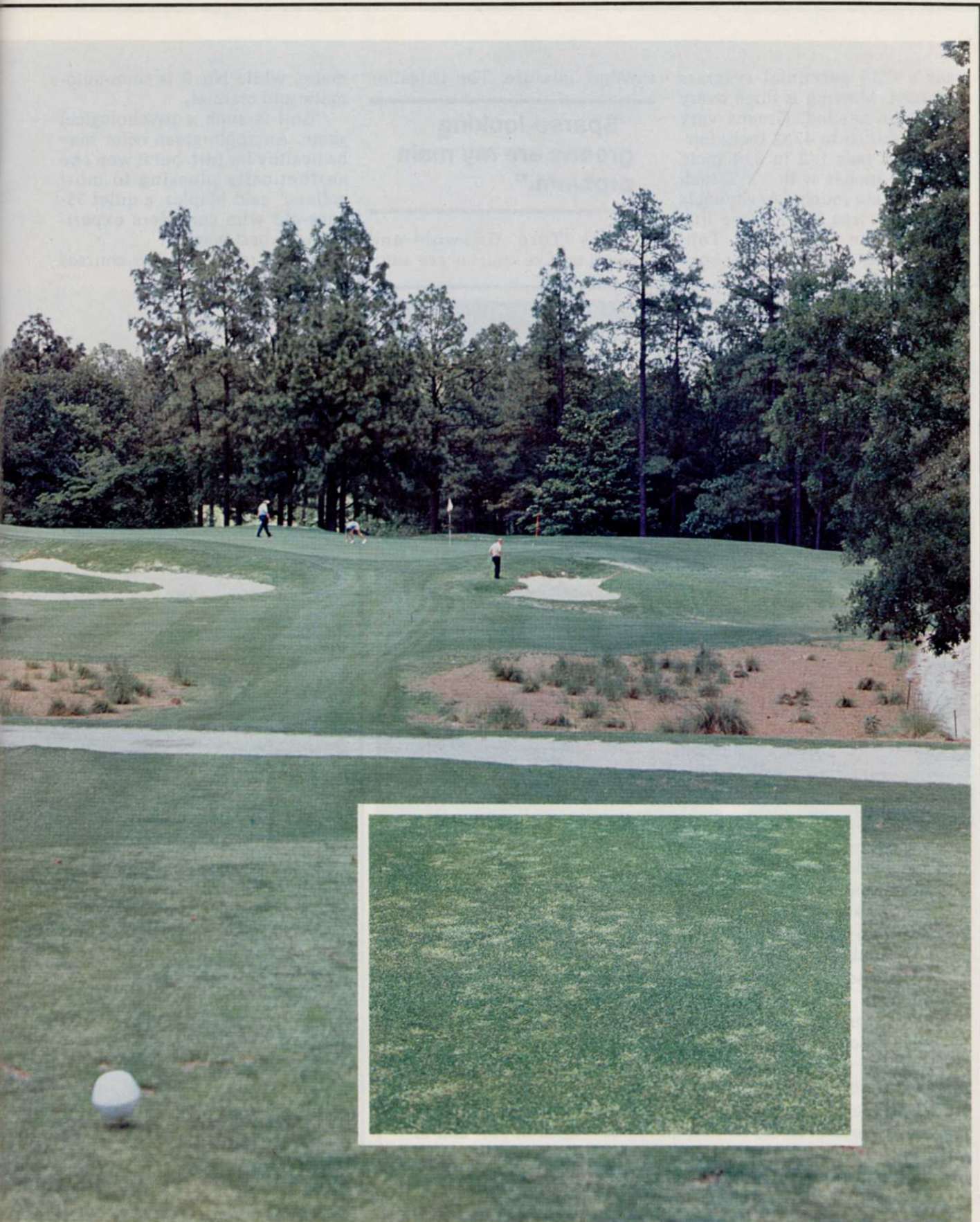
Maples and Metts work with Lee Dalton, superintendent on course No. 6 and Bob Farren on course No. 4. Bill Donnelly assists Metts and Barry Carter is another Pinehurst assistant superintendent.

### Lofty origins

Donald J. Ross designed courses 1 through 4 at Pinehurst. It is course No. 2, though, with its small, sloping greens, deep bunkers, loose, sandy soil and rough accented with love grass, that has emerged as the architect's *tour de force*. Because of its sloping greens and fringe areas, No. 2 has earned the dubious distinction of being the most difficult course in the world to play from within 50 yards of the greens.

"Sparse-looking greens are my main problem," said Maples.

Tees, greens and fairways are common bermudagrass. Maples



**Par 3** on Pinehurst No. 2. Inset shows *Poa annua* in bermudagrass fairways.

uses a CBS perennial ryegrass overseed. Mowing is done every day or as needed. Greens vary from 1/4 inch to 4/32 inch; fairways and tees 1/2 to 3/4 inch; roughs 2 inches with 1 1/2-inch intermediate roughs. Aerifying is done from tree line to tree line with a Ryan Greensaire. Top-dressing is a 3-2-1 sand, soil,

sawdust mixture. The irrigation

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**“Sparse-looking greens are my main problem.”**

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systems (Toro, Griswold and Moody) on five courses are auto-

matic, while No. 2 is semi-automatic and manual.

“Golf is such a psychological game. An apple green color may be healthy for turf, but it won't be aesthetically pleasing to most golfers,” said Maples, a quiet 35-year-old who considers experience the best teacher.

“I was raised on the courses



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Wayne Maples grew up on the courses at Pinehurst and manages the development's most prestigious course, No. 2.

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here at Pinehurst," he said.

He worked with his uncle, Ellis Maples, who designed course No. 5.

Starting off his career as a superintendent at Pinehurst, Maples left to build a course in Alabama, worked at Lake Surf (now Woodlake) and Foxfire, both in North Carolina, and then

returned to Pinehurst. Short courses at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and Clemson have rounded out Maples' work experience.

Pinehurst uses Toro Parkmasters, Greensmasters and Groundsmaster fairway mowers, Jacobsen Greensking walking greens mowers and Cushman-

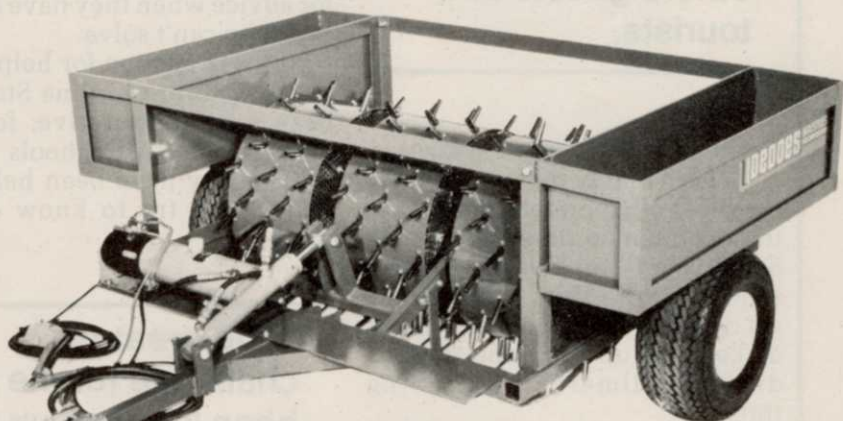
Ryan trucksters and outfront mowers. The more than 500 golf carts are taken care of outside the turf maintenance operation.

### Working with Mother Nature

The climate is Metts' biggest problem.

"We're in the transition zone and it's hard to deal with," he said.

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Metts controls pythium with Subdue and Terrazole. Chipco 26019, Acti-dione and Thiram take care of dollar spot and brown patch.

"Our disease program is both preventive and curative," he said. "There's a big difference growing bent and bermudagrass down here than in other parts of the country."

Metts, 40, a superintendent for the past 12 years, got his B.S. in Agronomy from Penn State, studying under Dr. Joe Duich. He

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### About half of Pinehurst's players are members, the others guests and tourists.

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has been at Pinehurst 2 1/2 years.

"There's more pressure to keep the level of maintenance up here than at other courses I've been at because of the heavy playing schedule," he said. "You never get caught up from the standpoint of keeping up with the golfers' divots, ballmarks and raking traps."

About half of Pinehurst's players are members, the others guests and tourists.

Metts grew up in Johnstown, PA. He worked at Norfolk Golf Club in Pennsylvania, did a stint in the military, was superintendent at Oxbow in Ohio for three years and worked at Parkersburg Country Club in West Virginia before coming to Pinehurst.

### Needs in the industry

Both men, while recognizing very distinct needs in their industry, are realists.

"The greatest challenge for me has been keeping up with all the changes in equipment and chemicals," said Metts. "There have been more changes in the last year than I've ever seen. The EPA has

banned chemicals that I've used with success for years. The equipment, on the whole, though, is better."

Equipment-wise, Maples disagrees.

"I don't mind change," he says. "There is always going to be change, but it has to be progressive change. Some technology has surpassed its usefulness like a lot of the hydraulic junk that's on the market. Everything seems to be hydraulic and with hydraulic equipment there's more chance of damaging the turf."

Metts would like to see the market introduce a small, light-weight mower that won't compact soil and better tee mowers.

Both superintendents use extension agents and universities for advice when they have a problem they can't solve.

"I'll ask anyone for help," said Metts. "North Carolina State has been very cooperative; for that matter most turf schools across the country have been helpful. I don't even try to know everything."

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Metts also says superintendents' associations are useful for the "intangible benefits" they offer.

And on days off will you find Maples' out playing the course he nurtures during the week? An emphatic "no."

"I really don't have enough time to become a good golfer. Besides I go out and see everything that's wrong or that I'd like to do better. I can't help but look at it from the maintenance angle."

WT&T

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